A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ONLINE VS OFFLINE BUYING BEHAVIOUR AMONG TEENAGERS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation synopsis entitled "**A Comparative Study of Online vs Offline Buying Behaviour Among Teenagers in Himachal Pradesh**" to be submitted for the partial fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy is my original work and the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or fellowship of similar other titles. It has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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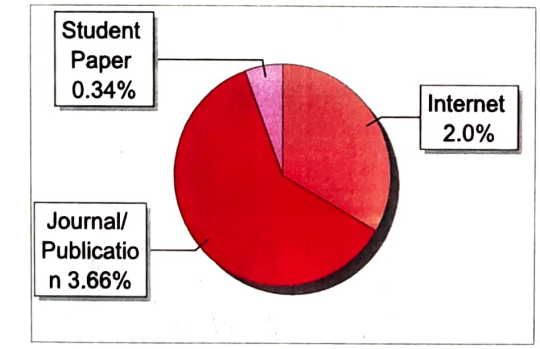

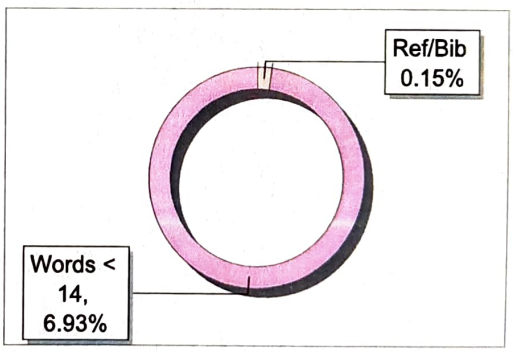

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1. INTRODUCTION

Teenagers are a diverse demographic with distinct patterns in both online and offline purchasing. Their buying behaviour is influenced by technology, social dynamics, and personal preferences. They are digital natives, utilizing social media influence to make informed decisions. E-commerce dominance is a significant factor, as teenagers prefer the convenience of online shopping and the vast array of options available. Mobile-centric online buying behaviour is also prevalent, with teenagers using smartphones for shopping. Trends and virality play a significant role in their buying habits, with viral content on platforms like TikTok or Instagram leading to quick online purchases. Offline buying offers a social experience, with shopping trips with friends or family contributing to a shared experience. Tactile engagement is crucial, especially for items like clothing, accessories, and cosmetics. In-store promotions can capture teenagers' attention, influencing spontaneous purchases. Brand loyalty is fostered through in-person interactions and personalized service.

Teenagers often blend online and offline channels in their purchase journey, either researching products online but making the final purchase in a physical store (Goyal et.al., 2023. Price sensitivity is a key factor, as teenagers actively seek discounts, promotions, and value for money in both online and offline settings. A positive brand image is essential, as teenagers engage with brands aligning with their values. In conclusion, understanding the dual dynamics of online and offline buying behaviour among teenagers is crucial for businesses and marketers seeking to connect with this demographic. Strategies that seamlessly integrate both channels and recognize their nuances are likely to resonate effectively with teenage consumers' evolving preferences.

1.1 Online Shopping

Online retailers sell a wide selection of items to consumers. Online stores provide a wide variety of things, including books, clothing, shoes, cosmetics, home appliances,

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toys, gift cards, software, hardware, and electronics. According to Kumar et.al. (2019), Gupta and Chandan (2020), Miglani (2022), and the best e-commerce businesses in India (2024), online shopping is the act of purchasing products and services from merchants who offer them on the Internet or website. A customer selects the products they want after virtually visiting the shop on the company's website. Until the customer is ready to buy, they may put these things in a virtual shopping cart. Many people like buying online for a number of reasons, including convenience, better costs, a wider selection, the ability to compare prices, and even obsessive purchasing. Shopkeepers often utilize their upselling talents to trick customers into purchasing items they do not need. Because of the limited selection at such stores and markets, customers often settle for less than they had hoped.

- **1.1.1 Online Retail Giants in India**

  - Founded in 1994 by Jeff Bezos, Amazon stands as the globe's most extensive online marketplace, offering an array of items such as books, electronics, movies, and software, among others (Top E-commerce Entities in India, 2024).
  - Originating from Bangalore, Flipkart captures a commanding 39.5% share of India's e-commerce sector, primarily leading in clothing sales (Top E-commerce Entities in India, 2024).
  - ShopClues.com, an Indian digital market space, boasts a network of over 12,000 retail partners and a catalog exceeding 2,000 products.
  - With a robust network of 275,000 merchants, Snapdeal serves over 30 million products to a reach spanning 6,000 urban and rural areas in India.
  - Specializing in the fashion domain, Myntra is known for its focus on offering customized gift items on demand.
  - eBay, an international online sales corporation, operates the auction and shopping site eBay.com, facilitating the purchase and sale of a wide range of goods and services globally. It has evolved to introduce instant purchase options, searches by UPC, ISBN, or SKU, online classified ads, ticket sales for events, among other features. From 2002 to 2015, eBay also managed PayPal, facilitating online payments as its subsidiary.

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1.1.2 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer Behaviour Understanding

Consumer behaviour delves into the process by which individuals, groups, or organizations make choices about acquiring, using, and disposing of goods, services, experiences, or ideas to meet their needs. It encompasses the influence of emotions, attitudes, and preferences on purchasing decisions. Often, consumer behaviour is observed in a collective context, such as when families or groups make joint decisions. Online consumers prioritize discovering new products, attractiveness, and affordability within their budget. The internet serves as a powerful tool for saving time and money, enabling price comparisons, and facilitating access to the latest news. Economic downturns have a pronounced effect on the patterns of online consumer behaviour. Factors such as internet savvy, experience, and incentives for shopping play a crucial role in online shopping habits.

Consumer behaviour is shaped by a mix of personal, psychological, and social influences. Demographics, motivation, perception, and belief systems play significant roles in shaping interests and opinions. Social circles, including family, friends, and social networks, as well as marketing strategies, economic conditions, personal tastes, and financial capacity, also significantly impact buying decisions.

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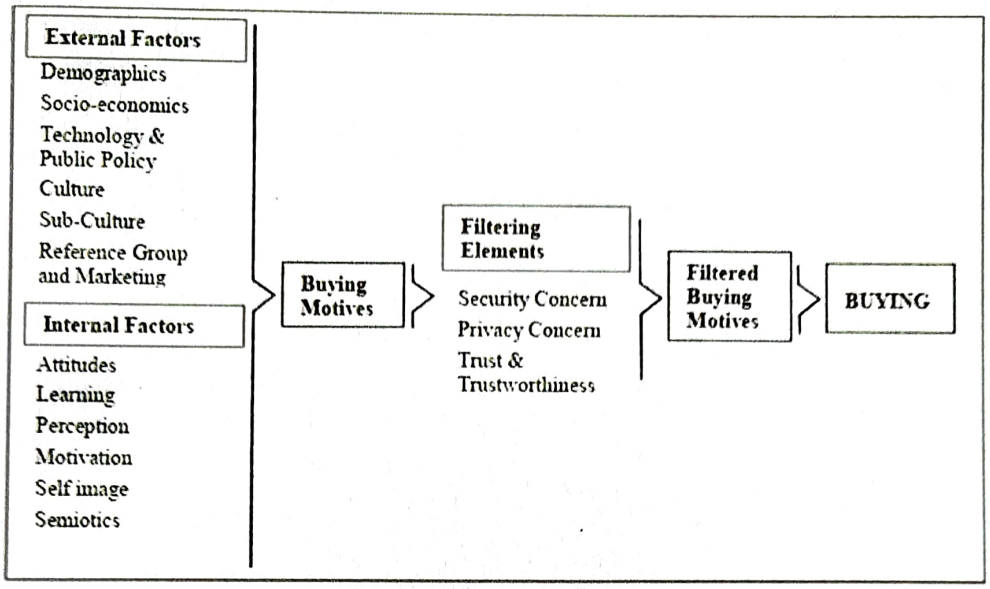

Figure 1.1: The FFF Model of Consumer Buying Behaviour

Influences on Online Consumer Behaviour

The FFF model, which stands for factors, filtering elements, and filtered buying behaviour, highlights the impact of both external and internal factors on consumers' decisions to purchase goods or services online. This model also takes into account the filtering processes that customers use when selecting an online retailer, combining a variety of influences that shape consumer Behaviour in the digital shopping landscape.

- **External and Internal Factors:** The Framework of Online Shopping Behavior

- The framework for understanding online shopping behavior integrates both external and internal elements that drive consumers toward making online purchases. External elements, encompassing demographics, socio-economic factors, technological advancements, public policies, cultural norms, and marketing strategies, exist outside of the consumer's immediate influence. On the other hand, internal elements are deeply rooted in the individual's traits and behaviors, including attitudes, learning experiences, perceptions, motivations, self-concept, and the interpretation of symbols or semiotics. These diverse factors converge to form the underlying motives for purchasing, which are categorized

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into functional and non-functional motives. Functional motives are practical considerations such as time savings, convenience of shopping location, specific consumer needs, and cost effectiveness. Non-functional motives, however, derive from cultural or social values, like the prestige associated with a store's brand name.

- Upon identifying their purchasing motives, consumers encounter what are known as filtering elements. These elements represent the challenges or barriers encountered during the online shopping journey. **Filtering Elements:** The main filtering elements in online consumer behaviour include security, privacy, and trustworthiness. Consumers are more likely to buy from websites if they feel secure, even if the product is cheaper than competitors. The high level of risk associated with internet shopping is a disadvantage compared to offline shopping, affecting consumer behaviour with concerns about security, privacy, trust, and trustworthiness.
- **Security:** In B2C e-commerce, web merchants like TRUSTe offer third-party privacy and security protection to protect customer information. These programs help customers feel confident in providing their personal information, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the online shopping environment. EMarketer's are responsible for keeping customer monetary and personal details safe, thereby ensuring the safety of their customers' transactions.
- **Privacy:** Consumers face psychological risks when shopping online, such as disappointment and frustration due to loss of privacy or personal information. Personal information can be tracked and used by third parties for spam. To protect themselves from fraud and spam, customers should be aware of their online activities. Websites should have privacy statements and third-party verification to reduce consumer concerns.
- **Trust and Trustworthiness:** Online trust is crucial for building customer-seller relationships, as customers rely on trust on websites to make purchases. Sellers must focus on building customer trust to ensure customers can buy without hesitation. After filtering, refined buying motives evolve, leading to online shopping.

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1.2 Offline Shopping

Offline shopping, also known as traditional or brick-and-mortar shopping, is crucial for various reasons despite the rise of online retail. It offers a tactile experience, allowing customers to touch, feel, try on, and physically inspect products before making a purchase. This is especially important for items like clothing, furniture, and cosmetics.

- Offline shopping offers immediate gratification and in-person customer service, enhancing the overall shopping experience and building customer loyalty. It also provides a social aspect that online shopping lacks, satisfying the desire for instant ownership.
- Offline shopping supports local communities by stimulating the economy, creating jobs, and fostering a sense of community, while visual merchandising in physical stores influences purchasing decisions.
- Physical stores offer more convenient returns and exchanges, as well as customization and personalization options through product tailoring, personalized recommendations from staff, and on-the-spot advice for individual preferences.
- Consumers value security and trust, especially for high-value items, and experiential shopping environments in physical stores with interactive displays, demonstrations, and events foster an emotional connection with the brand or product.
- Offline shopping is a popular choice for last-minute or emergency purchases due to its immediate access to nearby stores and its tangible, social, and immediate shopping experience, despite the convenience of online shopping.

Offline consumer behaviour is vital for traditional retail businesses and the economy, as it generates revenue, creates jobs, and supports local economies. Physical stores offer a unique shopping experience, allowing customers to interact with brands and build strong connections. Offline shopping also allows for immediate product acquisition without shipping, social interaction, and physical product testing and sampling. Community engagement through events, promotions, and partnerships contributes to a store's reputation and attracts loyal customers. In-store environments trigger impulse purchases through strategically placed displays and last-minute deals. Offline retailers also provide face-to-face customer service, enhancing customer

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satisfaction. Recognizing the importance of offline consumer behaviour helps businesses develop holistic strategies that integrate both online and offline channels.

1.3 Himachal Pradesh and E-Commerce

Himachal Pradesh, a North Indian state in the western Himalayas, was established in 1948 as the chief commissioner's province and became part of the Indian Union in 1950. The state has grown at an average rate, with a population of over 60 lakhs according to the 2011 census. The state has a high literacy rate of over 80% and a better-than-average population below the poverty line. The state is home to a vibrant mix of culture, with urban streets filled with tourists and village lines filled with mountains.

In 2011, Himachal Pradesh had 41,344 computer and internet users, accounting for 2.8% of total household internet users. Internet penetration in the state has grown from 18% to 20.26% in December 2017, with rural India showing higher growth rates. The companies must focus on bridging the gap between urban and rural India, as the estimated population of urban India is 455 million, with 295 million using the internet, and 918 million, with 186 million using it. There are 732 million potential users in rural India, which can be reached through efforts.

Online retailer Snapdeal has launched a 'special e-commerce zone' to facilitate the sale of local handicraft and other products, helping in invigorating and mainstreaming local economies. The number of internet users in Himachal Pradesh stood at 3.02 million in 2016, but the number of internet subscribers was the lowest among Indian states. The government is considering a pact with a telecom major to establish hundreds of communication towers in the state, paving the way for digital India. To strengthen this, the government plans to open multiple IT parks, with one in Shimla and another in Manali.

1.4 Online and Offline Behaviour in Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh's teenagers exhibit a unique blend of online and offline buying behaviour, influenced by the region's cultural, geographical, and socio-economic factors. The state's stunning landscapes and vibrant culture create a distinctive

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consumer landscape where traditional practices coexist with modern trends. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for businesses catering to this dynamic demographic.

1.4.1 Online Buying Behaviour:

Himachal Pradesh, like the rest of the world, has seen a significant surge in internet penetration, especially among the youth. Online buying behaviour among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh is characterized by:

- Digital Connectivity: Despite the hilly terrain, increased digital connectivity has empowered teenagers to engage in online activities. Access to smartphones and the internet has become integral to their daily lives.
- Social Media Influence: Social media platforms, such as Instagram and Facebook, play a pivotal role in shaping the preferences of Himachali teenagers. Influencers and peer recommendations on these platforms significantly impact their buying decisions.
- E-commerce Adoption: The convenience of online shopping is embraced by Himachali teenagers. E-commerce platforms provide access to a diverse range of products that may not be readily available in local markets.
- Cultural Considerations: Traditional Himachali attire, arts, and crafts may find representation in online spaces. Teenagers may explore e-commerce platforms to purchase culturally significant items.

1.4.2 Offline Buying Behaviour:

The offline buying behaviour of teenagers in Himachal Pradesh retains a connection to the region's rich cultural heritage and the charm of traditional markets. Key aspects include:

- Local Markets and Bazaars: Himachal Pradesh boasts vibrant local markets and bazaars where teenagers often engage in traditional brick-and-mortar shopping. The physicality of these markets, filled with local handicrafts and produce, offers a unique shopping experience.
- Community Influence: The close-knit communities in Himachal Pradesh contribute to offline buying behavior. Recommendations and preferences

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within the community hold considerable sway over teenagers' purchasing decisions.

- Festive and Cultural Celebrations: Festivals and cultural celebrations are integral to Himachali life. During these occasions, teenagers often engage in offline shopping to purchase traditional attire, accessories, and local specialties for festivities.
- Brand Loyalty with Local Businesses: Himachal Pradesh, with its emphasis on community and local businesses, may foster strong brand loyalty among teenagers towards indigenous products and establishments.

Overlapping Dynamics:

- Cultural Sensitivity: Both online and offline buying behavior is influenced by the cultural fabric of Himachal Pradesh. Businesses that align with local customs and traditions are likely to resonate well with teenagers.
- Tourist Influence: Given the state's popularity as a tourist destination, teenagers may also be exposed to global trends and preferences, impacting their buying behavior both online and offline.
- Accessibility Challenges: Despite the growth of online shopping, some remote areas in Himachal Pradesh may face challenges in terms of internet connectivity and accessibility to e-commerce services, making offline shopping more prevalent in these regions.

To comprehend the complexities of purchasing patterns, both online and offline, among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, it is necessary to adopt a subtle approach that acknowledges the cultural background and takes advantage of the digital developments available. Businesses that successfully integrate these components are well-positioned to attract the interest and devotion of this distinctive audience located in the heart of the Himalayas.

Table 1. Comparison between Online and Offline Behaviour

Factors Influencing Buying Behaviour	Online Buying Behaviour	Offline Buying Behaviour

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Information Gathering	Teens tend to research products online, read reviews, and compare prices before making a decision. They rely on online platforms, social media, and search engines for information.	In-store, teenagers may gather information from product displays, signage, and staff assistance. Peer recommendations and in-person interactions play a significant role in shaping decisions.
Influence Factors	Social media influencers, online reviews, and digital marketing campaigns have a substantial impact. Virtual peer influence from online communities and social networks can sway choices.	Friends, family, and in-person interactions have a direct influence on purchasing decisions. In-store promotions, displays, and staff recommendations can be influential.
Purchase Process	The purchasing process is often streamlined, with a few clicks to complete a transaction. Mobile shopping is prevalent, making it convenient for teens to shop anytime, anywhere.	In-store, the purchasing process involves physically navigating the space, trying out products, and standing in line for checkout. Payment is immediate, and the tangible aspect of purchasing is emphasized.
Brand Loyalty	Teens may exhibit brand loyalty online based on positive experiences, reviews, and digital interactions.	Physical stores contribute to brand loyalty through in-person experiences, quality assurance, and the ability to try products before purchasing.
Impulse Buying	While online platforms offer suggestions and promotions, impulse buying may be slightly controlled as the process involves more conscious decision-making.	In physical stores, the immediate availability of products can lead to more impulse purchases, especially if there are in-store promotions or displays.
Sensory Experience	Limited sensory experiences, relying more on visuals and reviews. Virtual try-ons or 360-degree product views may enhance the online experience.	The ability to touch, feel, try on, or test products in person provides a more immersive and sensory experience.
Returns and Exchanges	Returns and exchanges are facilitated through shipping back the product, which may be perceived as less convenient.	In-store returns and exchanges are immediate, providing a quick resolution to any issues.
Privacy and Security Concerns	Privacy and security concerns may influence online behavior, with some teens being cautious about sharing personal information.	In-store, there is a perception of immediate control over personal information, contributing to a sense of security.
Social Experience	Shopping online can be a solitary experience, with social interactions occurring virtually.	In-store shopping provides a social experience, allowing teens to shop with friends or

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		family.
Trends	Trends are often identified and spread rapidly through online platforms, contributing to a faster turnover in product preferences.	In-store, trends may still be influential, but the pace of trend adoption might be somewhat slower.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Literature Survey

Upadhyay and colleagues (2023) conducted research from a societal perspective on the impact of digital media advertising on FMCG consumers' purchasing decisions. This study gathered primary data from 500 individuals in the Low Hills (Urban) regions of northern India, specifically Himachal Pradesh, using purposive sampling between July 2018 and January 2019. Through factor analysis, it was concluded that a significant portion of respondents consume digital advertisements for information gathering, often spending substantial time in front of screens, particularly for viewing ads in mountainous locales.

Goyal and team (2023) explored the socio-economic influences on women's buying patterns regarding durable goods, employing reliability tests and factor analysis with a KMO value of 0.5. The research focused on 170 female consumers from regions including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir, using purposive sampling. The study underscores the evolving attitudes of female consumers and their significance in marketing strategies, with findings indicating that 67.427% of the variance in the study was accounted for.

Sharma & Sharma (2023) aimed to understand public perceptions of e-district services, emphasizing the enhancement of online service provisions. The study utilized data from 30 Common Service Centres (CSCs) in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, highlighting the critical role of CSCs in delivering services in areas with limited infrastructure and internet access. The research underscores the importance of bridging the digital divide to advance e-governance services in developing countries like India.

Thakur and associates (2023) investigated the preferences of Himachal Pradesh residents towards branded apparel and the factors influencing their choices. The study revealed that consumers in the area are well-informed about international brands, largely through family and friends, and make purchase decisions based on personal motives and perceptions, with less emphasis on status or advertising. Key factors include quality, design, innovation, convenience, and brand reputation.

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Sharma (2023) examined buying behaviors in Kullu District, Himachal Pradesh, with a focus on online and offline shopping preferences. The study identified key factors influencing online shopping behaviors and analyzed consumer attitudes and product preferences through a descriptive research design and a self-constructed questionnaire for 200 respondents, employing Excel and statistical tools for data analysis.

Raghav (2022) delved into the importance of online reviews, which describe product or service features based on user experiences. Highlighting the dual role of these reviews in e-commerce, the study emphasized their value in informing potential customers and providing feedback to sellers, thereby enhancing the online shopping experience.

Nadda (2022) investigated customer responses to online shopping experiences, particularly the actions taken following dissatisfaction. Using the Chi-square method, the study identified significant differences in customer expectations from online shopping sites, including immediate refunds or replacements and improvements in return policies and product delivery accuracy.

Miglani and colleagues (2022) examined the impact of Instagram on fashion brands' online presence and customer engagement, analyzing consumer reactions to marketing efforts on the platform by gender and age. The study found a positive correlation between Instagram engagement and increased traffic to brands' websites and online stores.

Raghav, S., Raghav, S., et al. (2022) examined that the ongoing audit is an undertaking to take apart the purchaser direct towards online shopping in area Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. For this study 300 respondents have been picked and information has been assembled with the help of overview. The results shows that web shopping has become notable among the energetic age clients (73.323%) essentially students (93.323%) between the age social affair of 20-30 years. Disclosures depicted that when a client decided to purchase on the web, they are prodded by different components like straightforwardness of purchasing or supportive, proficient, cost strong, wherever at whatever point, shrewd, and general classes openness. The straightforwardness of purchasing through on the web (53.393%) was seen as most well-known part among the clients. 90% purchasers contribute their 0-5 hour's energy on riding the web to purchase on the web. By and by purchasers convincing explanation need to visit the business areas and shops really. However a piece of the components are there which are becoming hindrances in electronic shopping. It is because customers can't truly contact, test, endeavor and see the things so when a solicitation is set, there is plausible getting erroneously thing.

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Khan (2021) investigated online consumer purchasing behavior in Punjab, India, during the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying preferred payment methods and the influence of social media, risk perception, and product orientation on online purchases. The study also noted the positive impact of lockdown measures on online shopping trends.

Devi (2021) explored the role of emotions in consumer purchasing decisions in the FMCG sector in District Solan, Himachal Pradesh. Utilizing a sample of 303 respondents, the study employed Google questionnaires and regression analysis, identifying several key emotional factors influencing buying behavior.

Moon and colleagues (2021) analyzed shopping preferences during the pandemic, comparing online and offline purchasing behaviors and intentions post-COVID-19, offering insights into consumer preferences during significant external impacts like a pandemic.

Ata & Sezer (2021) studied consumer channel preferences in omni-channel retailing using a multivariate probit model, highlighting the influence of age, gender, and communication strategies on channel choice and providing insights for online retailers.

Mishra and team (2021) explored determinants of online and offline buying behaviors, price perceptions, and product attribute influences on customer engagement, contributing to the understanding of shopping preferences.

Sondhi,J., et al(2021). stated that most individuals are busy and have a hectic schedule, online shopping has taken on a significant role in the twenty-first century. In such a circumstance, internet shopping became the most convenient and appropriate way of purchasing for them. The internet has altered the way people shop and has quickly grown into a worldwide phenomenon. This technique of shopping is known as business-to-consumer online shopping since an online store arouses the physical resemblance of buying items and services from an internet shop. The assumption of classical model behaviour is used in this study. The attitude and perceptions of internet consumers in Himachal Pradesh are investigated in this article.

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Gupta & Chandan (2020) analyzed the demographic impacts on trust, satisfaction, and repeat purchase intentions in online shopping, finding income level as a significant factor, offering valuable insights for targeting consumers online.

Yunji & Armstrong (2020) proposed a model for assessing online-to-offline (O2O) service quality, examining its effects on customer satisfaction and loyalty, and exploring the role of telepresence in influencing consumer perceptions.

Kumar and colleagues (2019) investigated online purchasing behaviors among college students, examining the impact of demographic factors on shopping preferences and highlighting significant differences across various criteria.

Tandon and team (2019) examined factors affecting online shopping satisfaction in India, identifying the importance of payment methods and social media interactions in influencing consumer preferences and satisfaction.

Guleria and associates (2018) explored consumer preferences between online and offline shopping channels, presenting a conceptual model to understand channel evaluation, emphasizing the importance of quality, value, and satisfaction in customer loyalty.

Janihua and colleagues (2018) studied online shopping perceptions among college students in Himachal Pradesh, identifying key factors influencing behavior and noting the minimal impact of demographics on shopping preferences.

Aragoncillo & Orus (2018) analyzed impulsive buying behaviors in the fashion industry across online and offline platforms, investigating the role of social media and the challenges of sampling strategies and variable measurements.

Sarkar & Das (2017) contrasted online and physical shopping behaviors in India, noting the rapid growth of online retail despite the preference for physical stores, and discussing the impact of discounts and real estate costs on retail trends.

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Hanekom & Barker (2016) proposed a theoretical approach to understanding consumer behavior online, focusing on information-seeking and consumption processes, and highlighting the need for comprehensive research methodologies.

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3. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

For a comparative study on online vs. offline buying behavior among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, the research objectives should be clear, specific, and focused on understanding the distinct aspects of these two modes of purchasing. Here are five potential objectives for your research:

3.1 Problem Statement

Problem Statement: A Comparative Study on Online vs Offline Buying Behavior Among Teenagers in Himachal Pradesh

Introduction to the Research Context

The advent of digital technology has revolutionized the retail landscape globally, leading to a significant shift in consumer buying behaviors. This shift is particularly noticeable among teenagers, a demographic that is highly influenced by technological advancements and social trends. In Himachal Pradesh, a region with a unique blend of urban and rural populations and varying degrees of digital penetration, the impact of this shift presents a compelling area for research. The comparative study of online and offline buying behaviors among teenagers in this region is not only relevant but also timely, considering the rapid evolution of retail channels and the growing accessibility of the internet and digital devices.

The Significance of the Study

Understanding the buying behaviors of teenagers is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, this demographic is a significant consumer segment and is likely to shape future market trends. Secondly, their buying patterns offer insights into the broader socio-economic and cultural shifts occurring in society. In the context of Himachal Pradesh, where traditional lifestyles coexist with modern influences, the study of how teenagers make purchasing decisions – whether online or offline – can reveal much about the intersection of tradition and modernity in consumer habits. Additionally, this research can provide valuable data for businesses and policymakers to tailor their strategies and policies to better cater to the needs and preferences of this demographic.

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Online vs. Offline Dynamics

The dichotomy between online and offline shopping presents several dimensions worth exploring. Online shopping offers convenience, a wider range of products, and often, competitive pricing. However, it also requires digital literacy and access to internet services, which can be a barrier in certain areas of Himachal Pradesh. Offline shopping, on the other hand, offers tactile experiences, immediate product access, and a personal touch, but may lack the variety and competitive pricing found online. The preferences of teenagers in choosing between these modes, and the factors influencing these preferences, are central to this study.

Digital Literacy and Access

In regions like Himachal Pradesh, the varying levels of digital literacy and internet access can significantly impact online buying behavior. This study aims to investigate how these factors influence teenagers' inclination towards online shopping. Are teenagers in more digitally literate areas more inclined to shop online? Does the lack of robust internet infrastructure in rural areas lead to a preference for offline shopping? These questions are vital in understanding the digital divide and its implications on consumer behavior.

Social and Economic Factors

Teenagers' buying behaviors are influenced by a myriad of social and economic factors. Peer influence, family income, exposure to media, and cultural norms play a significant role in shaping their purchasing decisions. This study seeks to dissect these factors to understand their relative impact on online and offline buying preferences. For instance, how does peer influence via social media compare to in-person peer interactions in affecting buying decisions? How do economic constraints shape the choice between online and offline purchases?

Methodological Considerations

The study's methodology, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative approaches, aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the buying behaviors. Surveys, interviews, and observational studies will be employed to gather data. However, this approach also presents challenges, such as ensuring a representative sample of the

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teenage population in Himachal Pradesh and mitigating biases in self-reported data. Additionally, the ethical considerations of researching a demographic that includes minors are paramount.

The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights into the evolving consumer behaviors of teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, highlighting the differences and similarities between online and offline shopping experiences. These insights will not only benefit retailers and marketers in tailoring their strategies but also contribute to academic discourse on consumer behavior in the digital age. Furthermore, understanding these behaviors can assist policymakers in addressing the digital divide and ensuring equitable access to digital resources across different regions.

3.2 Objectives

This problem statement provides a comprehensive overview of the research topic, outlining its significance, the key areas of investigation, and the potential challenges and implications of the study.

1. To Identify Preferences in Shopping Modes: Determine the preferred shopping modes (online vs. offline) among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh. This objective aims to understand which mode is more popular and why.

2. To Analyze Factors Influencing Buying Decisions: Examine the factors that influence teenagers' buying decisions in both online and offline settings. This could include aspects like convenience, price, peer influence, product variety, and accessibility.

3. To Assess the Impact of Digital Literacy on Online Shopping: Investigate how digital literacy and internet accessibility affect teenagers' inclination towards online shopping. This objective is crucial in understanding if and how digital skills and internet access drive online buying behavior.

4. To Compare Spending Patterns and Behaviors: Compare the spending patterns and behaviors of teenagers in online and offline shopping. This includes looking at aspects like average spending, frequency of purchases, types of products bought, and the role of discounts and promotions.

Internal

5. To Understand the Role of social media and Peer Influence: Explore the role of social media and peer groups in shaping teenagers' buying behavior, particularly in the online context. This objective seeks to understand how social media platforms and peer opinions impact teenagers' shopping choices and preferences.

3.3 Hypothesis

Based on the objectives you've outlined for the comparative study on online vs. offline buying behavior among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, here are seven hypotheses, each accompanied by its corresponding null hypothesis:

1. Null Hypothesis: Teenagers in Himachal Pradesh prefer online shopping over offline shopping due to its convenience and wider product range.

   Alternate Hypothesis: There is no significant preference for online shopping over offline shopping among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh.

2. Null Hypothesis: Factors such as price sensitivity and convenience significantly influence the buying decisions of teenagers in Himachal Pradesh in online settings compared to offline settings.

   Alternate Hypothesis: Price sensitivity and convenience do not significantly influence the buying decisions of teenagers in Himachal Pradesh differently in online and offline settings.

3. Null Hypothesis: Higher levels of digital literacy and internet accessibility are strongly associated with a greater inclination towards online shopping among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh.

   Alternate Hypothesis: Digital literacy and internet accessibility are not significantly associated with the preference for online shopping among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh.

4. Null hypothesis: Teenagers in Himachal Pradesh exhibit different spending patterns in online shopping compared to offline shopping, with higher average spending and frequency of purchases online.

   Alternate Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the spending patterns of teenagers in Himachal Pradesh between online and offline shopping.

Internal

5. Null Hypothesis: The influence of peer groups and social media is more pronounced in online buying decisions among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh than in offline buying decisions.

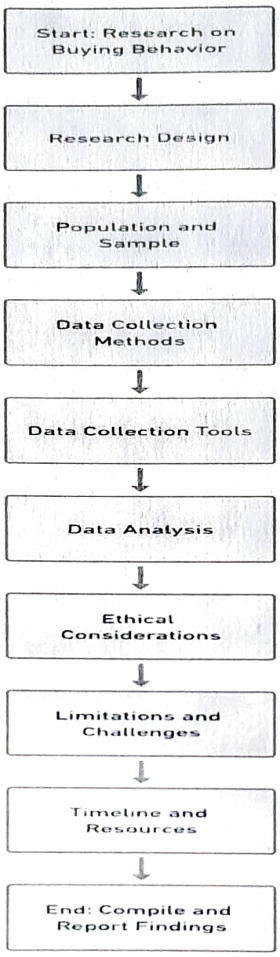
   Alternate Hypothesis: Peer groups and social media do not have a more pronounced influence on online buying decisions compared to offline buying decisions among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh.

These hypotheses and their corresponding null hypotheses are designed to systematically explore the various aspects of online and offline buying behaviors among teenagers in the specific context of Himachal Pradesh.

To conduct a comprehensive study on the comparative analysis of online vs. offline buying behavior among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, a well-structured research methodology is essential. Here's a suggested approach:

Internal

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



1. Research Design

- Type of Research: This study will employ a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research. This allows for a more in-depth understanding of buying behaviors.
- Study Setting: The research will be conducted in various urban and rural areas of Himachal Pradesh to ensure a diverse sample.

2. Population and Sample

- Target Population: Teenagers aged 13-19 years residing in Himachal Pradesh.

Internal

- Sampling Method: Use stratified random sampling to ensure representation from different regions, socio-economic backgrounds, and genders.
- Sample Size: Aim for a sample size of approximately 500-700 participants to ensure statistical relevance.

3. **Data Collection Methods**

- Surveys and Questionnaires: Develop structured questionnaires focusing on preferences, influences, spending patterns, and the impact of digital literacy and social media. Ensure questions align with the research objectives and hypotheses.
- Interviews: Conduct semi-structured interviews with a select group of participants for qualitative insights.
- Observational Studies: Optionally, conduct observational studies in both online and offline retail environments to gather non-intrusive behavioral data.

4. Data Collection Tools

- Online Survey Platforms: Utilize tools like Google Forms or SurveyMonkey for distributing and collecting survey responses.
- Interview Guides: Prepare interview guides with open-ended questions to facilitate in-depth discussions.
- Analytical Software: Use software like SPSS or R for quantitative data analysis and NVivo for qualitative data analysis.

5. **Data Analysis**

- Quantitative Data: Analyze using statistical methods such as frequency analysis, chi-square tests, t-tests, or ANOVA, depending on the nature of the hypotheses.
- Qualitative Data: Employ thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes in interview responses and observational data.

6. Ethical Considerations

- Informed Consent: Obtain informed consent from all participants, especially considering the involvement of minors.
- Confidentiality: Ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants' responses.

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- Ethical Approval: Seek approval from a relevant ethics committee or institutional review board.

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

Based on the objectives and hypotheses of study on online vs. offline buying behavior among teenagers in Himachal Pradesh, here is a sample 30-item questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale (where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree):

Preferences in Shopping Modes

1. I prefer online shopping over offline shopping.
2. I find online shopping more convenient than visiting physical stores.
3. Offline shopping offers a better shopping experience than online shopping.
4. I feel more satisfied when I purchase products offline.
5. I believe online shopping provides a wider range of products than offline stores.

Factors Influencing Buying Decisions

6. Price is a crucial factor in my decision to buy a product online.
7. The convenience of home delivery influences my preference for online shopping.
8. Peer recommendations are more influential in my offline purchasing decisions.
9. I am more likely to buy a product online if it is not available offline.
10. Accessibility of stores influences my preference for offline shopping.

Impact of Digital Literacy on Online Shopping

11. My level of comfort with using digital devices influences my preference for online shopping.

Internal

12. I am more inclined to shop online because of my ability to navigate e-commerce platforms.

13. Internet accessibility in my area affects how often I shop online.

14. I rely on online reviews and information to make purchasing decisions.

15. My familiarity with online payment methods makes me prefer online shopping.

Spending Patterns and Behaviors

16. I tend to spend more money when shopping online than offline.

17. I shop online more frequently than I visit physical stores.

18. Discounts and promotions are more enticing in online shopping.

19. I am more impulsive in purchasing items online than offline.

20. I am more likely to buy luxury or non-essential items online than offline.

Role of Social Media and Peer Influence

21. Social media advertisements significantly influence my online buying decisions.

22. Recommendations from friends on social media impact my online shopping choices.

23. I often buy products I see trending on social media platforms.

24. Peer influence is a major factor in my offline purchasing decisions.

25. I am more likely to purchase a product online if it is endorsed by someone, I follow on social media.

General Shopping Behaviors

26. I feel more secure in the quality of products when I buy them offline.

27. I often compare prices online before making a purchase offline.

28. The ability to physically inspect products is important to me.

Internal

29. I value the immediate availability of products in offline shopping.

30. I believe online shopping will become my primary mode of shopping in the future.

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5. Proposed Chapter Scheme

The study will be organised into following chapters:

Chapter 1. Introduction

Online Shopping

Online Shopping Players in India

Consumer Behaviour

Factors Affecting Online Consumer Behaviour

Offline Shopping

Himachal Pradesh and E-Commerce

Online and Offline Behaviour in Himachal Pradesh

Online Buying Behaviour

Offline Buying Behaviour

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Literature Survey and Review

Chapter 3. Research Design

Problem Statement, Need and Scope of the study

Objectives of the study

Hypothesis of the study

Sampling Techniques and Sample size

The Research Instrument

Data Collection

Statistical Analysis

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Chapter 4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5. Summary, Findings and Conclusion

References

Annexure

a) **Questionnaire**
b) **Research Papers**
c) **Conferences**
d) **Related Charts and Tables**

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